



**MOMENT OF PRIDE:** Wilson (third right) and Sharifah (third left) display their gold together with their teacher and mentor Saffrin (first left) and Empiang (centre). Also at KIA to welcome them were their student affairs teacher Wan Mustafa (second left) and MRSM Betong PTA chairman Wilson (second right), college mates and teachers.



**WELL DONE:** Wilson (left) and Sharifah (second right) share a light moment with Empiang (right). Their teacher Saffrin is at second left.

# Gold in Project Olympiad does state proud

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**KUCHING:** Two students from Sarawak struck gold in the International Sustainable World Energy Engineering Environmental Project Olympiad (I-SWEEP) 2013.

They are students of Mara Junior Science College (MRSM) Betong, Wilson Mujang Nyuwak and Sharifah Badriatul Afiqah Wan Madihi.

Yesterday, their college mates and teachers gave the duo and their teacher and project mentor Saffrin Mukhar Mohd Salleh a rousing welcome at Kuching International Airport (KIA).

Saffrin said the two students who won in the engineering category set a fine example for rural students in the state.

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Saffrin said the jury was very impressed by their project named 'The Potential of Polyethylene in

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Saffrin Mukhar Mohd Salleh, teacher and project mentor

the Production of Brick - From Waste to Wealth'. They made bricks from plastic powder derived from recycled plastic.

He disclosed that this is their second international award as prior to winning in Houston, the two students had won gold for this project in the 41sts International Invention and Innovation in Geneva, Switzerland held from April 10 to 14.

Saffrin said they experimented in the laboratory for six months and collaborated with Unimas' Faculty of Engineering under Professor Mat Abdul Manan.

The advanced research facilities



**WE DID IT!:** The winners with their medals while their teacher Saffrin looks on.

at Unimas helped them source for data that impressed the judges.

Saffrin said they are still doing in-depth research and will continue to collaborate with Unimas before commercialising their invention.

He said they use recycled plastic bottles crushed into powder - meaning they found a use for waste

plastic which is an environmental hazard globally.

The product uses a hollow beehive interlocking brick system to bind the brick together and does not need cement or plaster thereby saving on cost," he added.

Saffrin revealed that more than 300 schools and learning institutions representing 45

countries participated in the event in Houston. Four schools represented Malaysia.

"These other Malaysian representatives won the silver and bronze," he disclosed.

Sharifah who was ecstatic over winning their second gold said they prepared for a year and the idea for project came from the three of them.

She said the project did not interfere with their studies as they work on it in their spare time.

Wilson thanked his college and Mara for sponsoring their trips to Houston and was glad they won the gold again.

The two students recently won their third gold in a Special Award category at the Malaysian Technology Expo (MTE) 2013.

Among the VIP who welcomed the two teenagers and their teacher at KIA were the wife of deputy chief minister, Dato Sri Empiang Jabu, the college's Parent-Teacher Association chairman Wilson Entabang and Student Affairs teacher Wan Mustafa Wan Nawang.

Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr Alfred

Jabu Numpang said he was proud of Wilson and Sharifah Badriatul.

"They are the pride of all Malaysians and we will be holding a special function for them later in Betong," he said when met at Wisma Bapa Malaysia yesterday.

Jabu said the ability of Wilson and Sharifah Badriatul to shine in the international contest showed "the quality of rural brains is as good as urban brains and better than international brains".

He said the two students from Betong would be a motivation for the state government and parents to encourage children to pursue higher education.

"For that, the state government under the leadership of Chief Minister Pehin Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud has provided institutions of higher learning and skill training centres for our students to have their potential developed to the fullest."

When asked whether incentives would be given to the two students, Jabu said he would discuss with the state government. He believed some form of incentive would also be given to them at Betong level.